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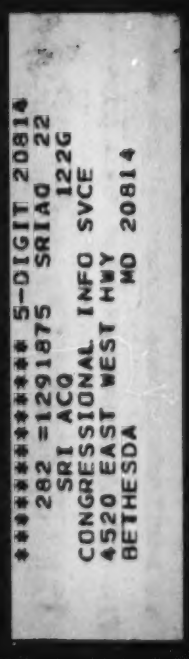
INFOSYSTEMS

Disaster Recovery Planning Tools



IBM Takes on Digital • A CASE of Unknown Identity

Parallel Processing • DBMS and the 9370

VDT Picture Gets Blurry • Network Control Systems

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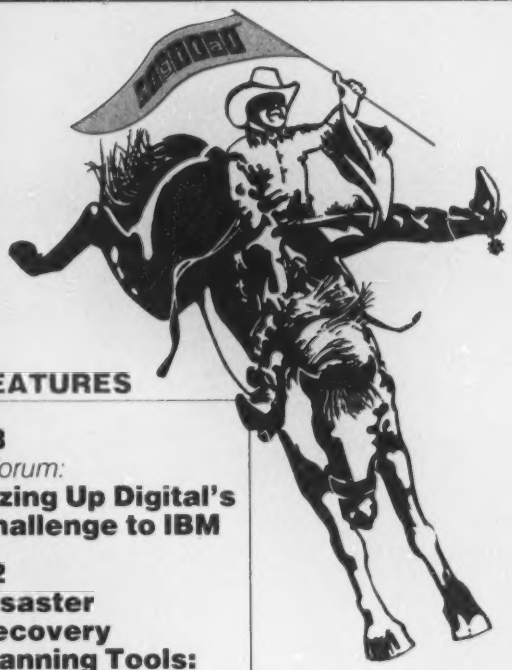

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Cover photo of burning building used courtesy of Comdisco Disaster Recovery Services, Rosemont, IL.

SNYDERS ON SOFTWARE

■ *By Jan Snyders, CSP Senior Editor Software*

The Changing World of Spreadsheets

Names may have changed, but mainframe software can still help the budget-weary manager achieve logic and accuracy.

I first wrote about spreadsheets for the mainframe in October 1984. What had been a one-vendor category that June had nine vendors by August. In the ensuing years the players have changed again: the nine have expanded to 11 and many of the names are new.

One spreadsheet I reported on came from Oxford Software in Hasbrouk Heights, NJ. Oxford was subsequently sold to Martin Marietta, who in turn sold it to On-Line Software in Fort Lee, NJ. The Mega Group (Irving, CA) sold its product to Computer Assoc., and Cincom Systems of Cincinnati dropped its offering. Despite this consolidation, several new players have taken the field, and some of the older ones have enhanced their products.

Business Model Systems, Westmont, IL, has spreadsheets designed specifically for the IBM Systems/36 and /38. *Minitplan/36* and *Minitplan/38* allow up to 10,000 worksheets in a model. Each can interact with an unlimited number of models. This facility, together with interworksheet calculations, allows logical organization.

Each worksheet can contain up to 10,000 rows and 97 columns. Data from Lotus *1-2-3* worksheets can be moved into *Minitplan/36* and */38* or vice versa. *Minitplan/36* has interfaces to *Display Write/36* (the IBM word processing system) and *Business Graphics/36. Minitplan/38* interfaces to *Office/38 Text Management* and *Office/38 Business Graphics.*

The *Minitplan* systems can access any file on a System/36 or /38 and selectively draw information into a worksheet. The user can have multiple interfaces so a worksheet can draw selectively from several files.

Referenced by name. Dynasoft in Rosemont, IL, says its *Dynaplan* spreadsheet is full functioned, combining the best features of *1-2-3* and other micro-based products with the advantages of mainframes. The command-selection menus, for example, resemble the *1-2-3* command selection process. A cell-pointing feature lets the user point to cells on the terminal's screen. The system also supports range names: Part of the spreadsheet may be referenced by a name rather than cell coordinates.

Dynaplan's basic spreadsheet includes a capability to sort parts of the worksheet on any number of keys. This is useful for applications that use the worksheet as a small relational data base. The system has capability for worksheets with up to 702 columns by 32,760 rows.

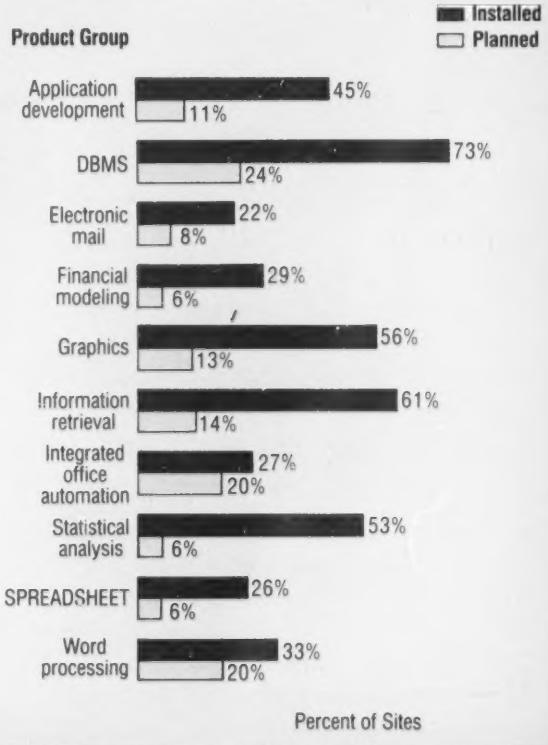
Worksheets are three-dimensional with up to 255 planes. This increases the ability to accommodate multiple departments. Each department's budget can be assigned to a separate page, or several related worksheets can be combined into a single three-dimensional structure. There is direct cell references between worksheets.

Standard commands. Boeing Computer Services, Seattle, WA, offers a system called *Boeing Calc.* The system works on IBM 370, 43XX, 30XX and compatibles as well as microcomputers. Using hard disk storage and virtual memory, the user can create spreadsheets with up to 16,000 rows, columns and pages. Using the same standard commands as *1-2-3*, existing *1-2-3* or *Symphony* files can be imported to the larger system. *Boeing Calc* can utilize user-defined menus to build macros.

Boeing Calc can also be used on a

Information Center Spreadsheets

Computer Intelligence, La Jolla, CA, surveyed over 600 IBM and plug-compatible mainframe sites with an implemented Information Center. Information was collected on both host mainframe and microcomputer systems used to support Information Center activities.



local area network. Each user can access the same spreadsheet simultaneously. The system provides security for each user down to the cell level. A system administrator matches task and security requirements to each user: Designated users can see but not change various parts of the spreadsheet; other portions can be hidden. Data can be consolidated from separate users onto a master page.

Trax Softworks' *ESS (Electronic Spread Sheet)* is a decision support tool that provides three-dimensional spreadsheets, Lotus compatibility and mainframe file access. In addition, it offers graphics support and macro processing for TSO (MVS and MVS/XA), CICS (DOS and MVS), VM/CMS and ADR/Roscoe systems.

ESS is compatible with Lotus *1-2-3* in two ways. It can read and write Lotus (Release 1A and 2) binary worksheet files, and applications that outgrow the micro can be uploaded. The *ESS* commands and prompts are similar to *1-2-3* so anyone familiar with Lotus can quickly learn *ESS*.

Written in Assembler to minimize central processing unit time, memory and disk storage requirements, *ESS* can handle one million rows by one million columns by one million pages. Installation involves one program, one module and no additional systems software. *ESS* can interface to IBM's DB2 and SQL/DS, and read any VSAM or sequential mainframe file.

Three-level protection. Sterling Software's Dylakor Div. (Chatsworth, CA) entered the applications software field with *Dyl-Calc*. The spreadsheet can be accessed by several users. Several spreadsheets can be viewed, edited and integrated on the same screen. Data can be extracted from virtually any mainframe data base or file. Three-level password protection is available, including protection at the spreadsheet level. Individual cells containing constants can be protected, allowing alteration of variables only.

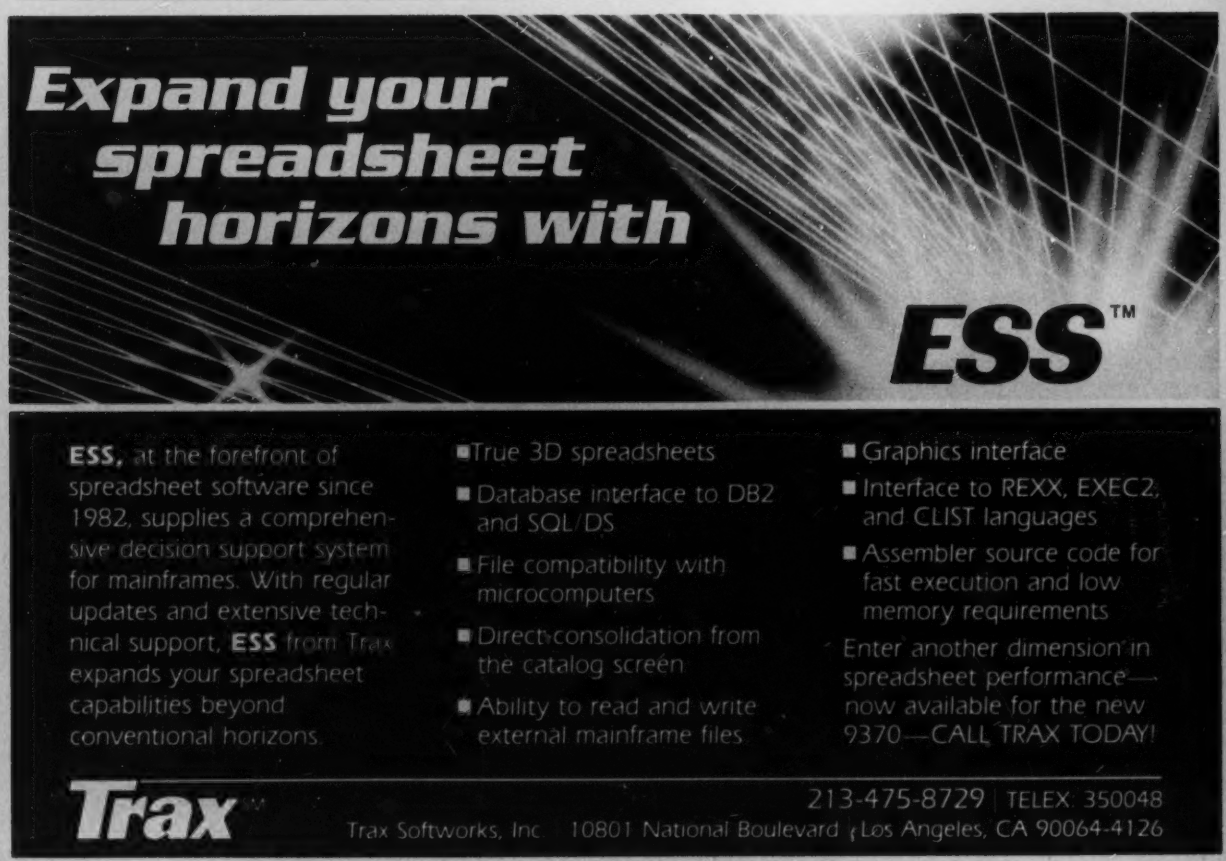
When introduced in March 1986, *Dyl-Calc* operated under either an MVS or DOS/VSE operating environment, requiring CICS or TSO under MVS. A VM/CMS version was announced this year.

Computer Assoc. (CA), Garden City, NY, entered the spreadsheet arena with its purchase of *Megacalc*. CA has made several changes, including changing the name of the product to *SuperCalc/MF* to more accurately portray the relation between its microcomputer and mainframe spreadsheet products. *SuperCalc/MF* is designed to access corporate data from data bases, financial systems, spreadsheets, sequential files and VSAM files. Data base files can be accessed from within *SuperCalc/MF*, ensuring as current and accurate data as possible.

The system can import microcomputer spreadsheet fields for central consolidation of data. It enables users to consolidate files created with microcomputer spreadsheets such as *SuperCalc4* and *1-2-3*.

In addition to the change in product name, CA announced a *SuperCalc/MF* interface to IBM's DB2 data base. The DB2 interface provides simple access to IBM-mainframe DB2 files from within *SuperCalc/MF*. It is designed to function in the MVS operating environment. (IS)

For a list of mainframe spreadsheet software vendors and their products enter No. 11 on the Reader Information Card.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